

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: TALK OF PNA MERGER GATHERS STEAM

1. WITH THE BEGINNING OF OPEN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING ONLY WEEKS AWAY, WE HAVE BEGUN TO HEAR INCREASING TALK OF A FORMAL MERGER OF THE NINE CONSTITUENT PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE PARTIES INTO ONE. UP UNTIL TWO WEEKS AGO, OUR PNA SOURCES CONSIDERED THE COALITION MERELY A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE, AND EXPECTED AND DESIRED THE PNA TO DISSOLVE WITHIN A YEAR AFTER THE OCTOBER POLLS AND THEN FORM VARIOUS COALITIONS FOR NEW ELECTIONS.

2. THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THE PNA, INCLUDING PNJ PRESIDENT MUFTI MAHMOOD HAVE BEEN QUOTED IN RECENT PRESS REPORTS AS FAVORING FORMAL MERGER AFTER THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS. MUFTI, WHO SAID ON AUGUST 23 THAT A PNA MERGER WOULD BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY, NOTED THAT THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO FORMAL UNION WAS THE DISTINCT CHARACTER OF

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THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE OBJECTION MIGHT BE OVERCOME IF THE PARTIES FUNCTIONED INDEPENDENTLY IN THE RELIGIOUS FIELD WHILE OPERATING AS ONE UNIT POLITICALLY. ANOTHER LEADING PUBLICIST HAS BEEN PNA SECRETARY-GENERAL PROFESSOR GHAFOR, WHO WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT SINCE THE PNA ALREADY SHARES "ONE FLAG, ONE PRESIDENT AND ONE PLATFORM," FORMAL MERGER WAS A LOGICAL

CONSEQUENCE. PNA LEADER NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN HAS TOLD THE PRESS THAT, SINCE THE PNA MAY COME TO POWER IN THE NEAR FUTURE, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT A RESPONSIBLE AND MATURE PARTY EMERGE OUT OF THE "DISCIPLINED AND INGRAINED DEMOCRATIC FUNCTIONING OF THE NINE PARTY ALLIANCE." AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN HAS ALSO CALLED FOR GREATER UNITY AMONG PNA PARTIES. THERE HAVE EVEN BEEN POSITIVE COMPARISONS, RARE IN PAKISTANI POLITICS, TO THE SUCCESS OF THE INDIAN JANATA PARTY.

3. HOWEVER, ALL NINE PARTIES ARE NOT YET ON THE BANDWAGON. THERE ARE THOSE WHO STILL SUBSCRIBE TO THE EARLIER ANALYSIS, AND PREDICT THE PNA'S DEMISE. MAULANA NOORANI, LEADER OF THE JUP, HAS CALLED TALK OF A MERGER THE "GREAT ILLUSION."

4. COMMENT: THE PNA STILL HAS VERY SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS THAT WOULD NEED TO BE SOLVED BEFORE ANY MERGER COULD BE ACHIEVED. CONTINUED SQUABBLING OVER THE ALLOCATIONS OF ELCTIONS TICKETS, FOR EXAMPLE, COULD BRING TALK OF A MERGER TO A HALT. THIS RECENT PUBLIC SPECULATION ON FUTURE UNITY MAY BE PARTIALLY DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE THE DECISION OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION AS IT MEETS TO DETERMINE IF THE PNA DESERVES ONE SYMBOL OR NINE. THE PNA IS ALSO IN THE THROES OF PRE-ELECTION EUPHORIA, AND MAY HAVE BEGUN TO SEE THEIR PROBLEM AS HOW TO HOLD ON TO POWER AFTER A SMASHING OCTOBER VICTORY. THE DISTANCE, HOWEVER, BETWEEN WISHES AND FULFILLMENT IS LONG IN PAKISTANI PARTY POLITICS.

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HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

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